(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of persons found guilty, so far, in the entire incident and the action taken against them; and

(d) the various aspects to be inquired into by Government and by when the inquiry would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. During the last three years (2004, 2005 and 2006), out of 372 field checks conducted by Vigilance, irregularities have been noticed in 99 cases. In these cases, 160 officials have been found guilty for various irregularities. Disciplinary proceedings have been initiated against 81 officials while adminisrative action has been initiated against remaining 79 officials.

(d) Quantity and Quality aspects of ballast supply are normally checked during field checks conducted by Vigilance and such checks are a continuous process.

Retail trade

†524. SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways is planning to enter in the field of retail trade with the help of some private retailer trading companies;

(b) whether there is any proposal of leasing the land to the said companies under this scheme; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) It has been decided to explore the feasibility of attracting additional transport volumes by leveraging surplus railway land through partnership with agri-retail chain. Zonal Railways have been asked to identify spare-able land at suitable locations for this purpose. The modalities of the utilization of the land through agri-retail chain are yet to be finalized.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.